

The study area for each resource is specifically defined at the beginning of each section, based first on the assumption that direct impacts of a specific alternative are most likely to occur within the PSA. Additionally, there is recognition that some impacts have the potential for a wider or narrower range, based on the environmental resource being addressed. For example, the study area for traffic analysis is confined to the actual roadway (pavement and shoulders) and bridge utilized by motor vehicles. Further, the study area for biological resources may extend outside the PSA, depending on the species or resource that is evaluated.

### **3.1 Socioeconomics**

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This section contains population, demographic, employment, community and other social and economic information pertinent to the understanding of Tyrrell and Dare counties, the Town of Columbia and, as available, the Alligator and East Lake communities.

#### **3.1.1 Population and Demographics**

A demographic area was defined for reporting population information. This area consists of the US Census block groups that overlap any portion of the PSA. These include the four block groups that encompass the entirety of Tyrrell County – 9601001, 9601002, 9601003, and 9601004 – as well as the single block group for mainland Dare County – 9705004 (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4).

This section contains population and demographic information reported by demographic area, Tyrrell County, Dare County, the Town of Columbia and, in some cases, the state of North Carolina. Data are generally from the US Census, North Carolina Department of Commerce, and/or North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management. The American Community Survey of the US Census does not report population or demographic information for communities with populations less than 20,000 (the Town of Columbia has a population less than 1,000). However, the US Census, Population Division, provides population estimates for incorporated communities across the nation, including the Town of Columbia. This information and the most recent population estimates from the Town of Columbia are in this section.

There is no known source of population or demographic information specifically for the Alligator or East Lake communities; population information for these unincorporated communities is not available from the US Census or the North Carolina Department of Commerce. However, based on aerial imagery and field investigations, these two communities are much smaller than the Town of Columbia. Even though imprecise data exists, an attempt was made to provide estimates - based on the number of homes in each of these communities and county-level average household sizes.

##### **3.1.1.1 Population**

###### **Demographic Area**

The demographic area consists of the US Census block groups that overlap any portion of the PSA (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4). As shown in Table 3-1, population in the